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Title: Police and Community in Twentieth-Century Scotland: the use of historical models

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ABSTRACT

This article uses archival research and interviews to construct a social history of the relationship between police officers and the diverse communities they served in two contrasting regions of Scotland for the period c. 1900-1970: Glasgow and west central Scotland, and the Highlands and Islands. It argues these relationships were diverse and complex, shaped by local cultural, social and economic factors. Moreover, it identifies key constitutive elements that enabled or disrupted the forging of trust and legitimacy in urban and rural areas, including discretion, 'insider' status and embeddedness with settlements, enhancing and reinforcing conclusions of other studies of more recent 'community policing' models.

KEYWORDS

Police, community, Scotland, history, urban, rural

Police and Community in Twentieth-Century Scotland: the use of historical models

Introduction

Debates about how best to forge effective relationships between the formal police service and local communities have been influential in shaping policy, structures and practices for more than thirty years in the UK, USA and beyond (Rosenbaum 1994; Brogden and Nijhar 2005; Mackenzie & Henry 2009). In the UK context the concept, model or approach (albeit contested) that has been labelled ‘community policing’ has been seen as a response to the erosion of public confidence in police legitimacy since at least the 1970s; as a critique of rapid response policing strategies that emerged in the late 1950s; and as a return to an ethos of ‘traditional policing’ epitomized in the ‘village constable’ or ‘bobby on the beat’ of the 1930-50s (Alderson 1979; Schaffer 1980). Writing in 1980 about Scotland, Shanks suggested that community involvement had been practised unwittingly ‘in various forms, since the institution of the police force – and most notably perhaps through the traditional village constable’ (Shanks 1980: 4). Since forms of remembering and mythologizing significantly infuse current perceptions (Loader 2003), it is perhaps surprising that historical research on the changing social and political relationships between police officers and the communities that they have served has been slow to develop.

This article aims to dislodge the lens of ‘golden ageism’ (which has been predominant in popular assumptions about both ‘police’ and ‘community’) by proposing a methodology for evaluating the complexity of the police-community dynamic across time. Clearly it is problematic to draw ‘lessons’ from the past (Fielding 2002). Whilst the experience of policing is always historically, geographically and culturally specific, the rapid technological, industrial, and social change of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century means there is little that can be assumed as constant. The nature and applicability of the ‘lessons’ in question are to this extent uncertain. Nevertheless, we suggest not only that a social history of police and community is necessary to better understand the past and to correct distorted representations of it, but also that it can reveal key constitutive elements and factors that have enabled (or disrupted) the forging of trust and legitimacy and which reinforce and enhance conclusions gleaned from other studies of the dynamics of relations between police and communities.

The article is grounded in empirical research on case studies relating to the Scottish experience for a number of reasons. First, it has been argued that (in the UK context)

‘community policing’ (loosely understood to imply approaches that were decentralised, preventative, and collaborative) was pioneered in Scotland, where the police worked in close co-operation with communities and other agencies long before statutory legislation made it a requirement (Schaffer 1980; Donnelly 2005). The explicit use of the terminology of ‘community policing’ was introduced in Scotland in 1971 (ahead of England and Wales) as a result of the Scottish Office recommendation that Community Involvement Branches (CIBs) should be established in all Scottish police forces. Whilst CIBs and subsequent formal initiatives (such as the ‘Safer Cities’ programmes, Community Safety Partnerships and Community Planning) have been evaluated in a series of academic studies (Schaffer 1980; Shanks 1980; Monaghan 1997; Henry 2009), the period before 1971 remains largely uncharted and thus the claim that a Scottish approach has ‘always’ been community-oriented remains untested.

Existing historical study of Scottish policing has focused overwhelmingly on the years before 1900 (Barrie 2008; Carson & Idzikowska 1989; Dinsmoor & Goldsmith 2005; Goldsmith 2002; Smale 2007). The nineteenth-century relationship between police and local community has been characterised in terms of consent, based on a tradition of shared responsibility for ‘watching and warding’, although this should not be overstated given the influence of local elites in the decision-making process. Moreover, in Scotland the term ‘police’ was used until the beginning of the twentieth century to refer to a broad range of regulatory functions associated with ‘the common good, comfort and security’ and thus with civic improvement. Whilst it is acknowledged that distinctions were gradually made by 1900 between ‘law and order’ aspects of ‘police’ (involving the use of the criminal law) and those pertaining to civil regulation, the effect of this shift has not been researched in any depth. Full evaluation of the extent to which Scottish policing in the twentieth century was shaped by an ethos of consent and a sense of what is now characterised as ‘partnership’ with communities is long over-due. The social history of policing in twentieth-century England and Wales has been researched extensively (eg. Brogden 1991; Emsley 1991; Klein 2010; Jones 1996; Weinberger 1995) but equivalent work on Scotland is limited to work on Glasgow gangs and youth justice (Davies 1998, 2007 and 2013; Bartie 2010; Bartie & Jackson 2011; Jackson 2014). Banton’s *The Policeman in the Community* (1964), seen as a foundational text within police studies, provided a snap-shot of the preventative and social role of police in one Scottish city division (taken to be Edinburgh) in the early 1960s. Yet surprisingly little work

has been done to situate Banton's study historically (looking at earlier decades) or geographically (across urban and rural areas).

Secondly, an examination of Scotland enables consideration of contrasting settlement types, given the significant concentration of population by the twentieth century in the highly urbanised central belt (including Glasgow and Edinburgh) and sparseness of population (officially categorised as 'very remote and rural') in the significant land area of the Highlands and islands. The formalisation of police function has been associated with the rise of modern bureaucracies and disciplinary practices as mechanisms to manage increasingly large and complex populations (within 'criminogenic' urban environments). By contrast, and indeed in consequence, the 'remote and rural' regions have been largely occluded from twentieth-century police history. However, as the contributors to a recent volume have shown, rural policing is worthy of separate consideration and, indeed, the countryside frequently emerges as far from idyllic (Mawby and Yarwood, 2011). The Scottish context enables us to move beyond the ideal types of 'traditional' (or 'village') and 'modern' (urban) societies to reflect on the particularities of specific rural and urban communities. Nevertheless, this article also suggests frameworks for modelling and evaluating police-community relationships that are likely to be applicable across examples and case studies.

A third rationale for the use of Scottish examples lies in the creation of Police Scotland in April 2013 as a single service replacing the former eight regional or 'legacy' forces through which policing had been delivered in Scotland since 1975. This can be seen as part of a centralising trajectory through which policing has been increasingly consolidated in the hands of a national (and since 1999, devolved) government: the number of separate police forces in Scotland were reduced from 69 in 1900 to 48 in 1939 and 20 by 1968. The official rhetoric associated with Police Scotland has continued to emphasise the need to 'keep policing local'.¹ Yet concerns emerged in 2014 amongst local populations in rural areas that the closure of counters in small police stations (Scottish Borders region) and the presence of armed units (Highland region) as part of a 'one-size fits all' approach were eroding the ability of police officers to respond to the needs of local communities. This article seeks, therefore,

¹ Police Scotland, *Annual Police Plan 2014/15* (2014), <http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/138327/150739/policescotlandannualpoliceplan2014-15?view=Standard> (accessed 6 Sept 2014), 4.

to contribute to debates regarding the forms and structures that effective community-police relationships can take in rural areas of Scotland.

This article draws on extensive archival research that was conducted on historical records relating to police forces in two contrasting regions of Scotland: Glasgow and west central Scotland (the former Strathclyde Police legacy force); and the Highlands and islands (formerly Northern Constabulary). Printed and manuscript sources consulted include personnel records (which have been analysed as large datasets in order to guarantee full anonymity), letters books and complaints books, police station occurrence books, minutes of committees, official reports, published memoirs, and newspapers. Special permission was granted by the legacy forces to access material containing personal data beyond the usual 75-year closure period: until 1950 for Strathclyde and until 1970 for the Northern district. Archival sources relating to the first half of the twentieth century were complemented by 40 oral history interviews conducted with retired police officers (contacted through the Retired Police Officers Association for Scotland) who had served in the two legacy forces and their earlier constituent forces (see figures 1 and 2). Interviewees had joined the police service between 1945 and 1972, and mostly served a full thirty years before retiring between 1975 and 2002, enabling them to reflect on changes across their service.

Our aim here is not to offer detailed assessment of historical methodologies themselves or of the individual component elements of the research, but to reflect more broadly on the significance of this vast repertoire of material for current debates regarding policy-community relations. We focus in particular on materials relating to inner-city Glasgow, an area which until the regionalisation of 1975 came under the auspices of Glasgow City Police, as well as on the ‘remote and rural’ areas of the highlands and islands which historically came under the auspices of the county constabularies of Inverness-shire, Sutherland, and Caithness-shire (finally re-constituted as Northern Constabulary after 1975) as well as Argyllshire (which included the island of Islay and which was consolidated into Strathclyde Police with Glasgow City and a number of other forces in 1975).

[INSERT FIGS 1 AND 2 HERE]

The idea of ‘community’

Clearly the term ‘community’ notoriously has multiple uses, meanings, effects and applications (Delanty, 2003). We recognise that it is itself an ‘evocative symbol’ or ‘complex

of ideas', whose meaning has shifted across time but has tended to convey benign values of mutuality and reciprocity, and thus has had an ideological or normative function (Calhoun 1980; Bauman 2001; Crawford 1995). The rhetorical deployment of the term 'community' can itself serve to constitute or construct a set of social associations or responsibilities in reference to place. Lacey and Zedner (2000) have suggested that 'appeals to community' have become stronger in Britain in recent decades (and since the 1980s) because of a paradoxical weakening of co-operation and social integration (or, at the very least, concerns about the latter). This nostalgia (the romantic quest to reconstruct lost community) is absent from the historical record. Key-word searches of the digital archive of the *Scotsman* newspaper for the period 1900-1950 showed very few direct evocations of the concept of 'community' in relation to policing in this earlier period. Rather, local politicians and senior police officers were more likely to refer to the service offered by the 'police' to the 'public', which tended to be tied up with political ideas about liberal governance and accountability to municipal (or county) authorities rather than the interpersonal, the social or 'grassroots'. The fear for local elites was one of losing local administrative and political control, not the social ties of 'community', in the period before 1970.

A further understanding of 'community' is as a moral, cultural and social collective. Yet the creation of this collective identity has, historically, involved inclusion of some social groups and the exclusion or marginalization of others (because of gender, age, religion, politics, ethnicity, status, or poverty) who may also constitute groups that feel most disaffected with the police. Indeed, the rhetoric of 'community' can be used to conceal internal conflict and tension. This article will contribute to awareness that the problem of social exclusion is as much a facet of rural areas as the urban, in which individuals have been differentiated through processes of 'othering' that involve the attribution of insider' and 'outsider' status (Sibley 1995). Indeed 'rural spaces should not be seen as having ever been homogenous entities but instead as diverse and pluralistic settings with competing normative communities' (Mawby and Yarwood 2011: 3). It is necessary therefore to identify conflicts within and between collectives (including the positioning of the police in relation to conflict) and to identify *who* has been assumed by the police to represent 'communities' as stakeholders/gate-keepers, *who* has assumed the right to speak and on whose behalf, and whether these individuals were already prominent members of religious organizations, voluntary agencies or other private/public bodies. Such an approach also involves examining to what extent 'police' and 'community' are at times overlapping and at other times

contradictory identities. Existing studies suggest that police officers are likely to be located as both part of ‘community’ (as private individuals) and as separate from it (because of their official role as representatives of the state) (Banton 1964; Reiner 1978). The concept of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ status is as applicable to the police themselves as to the social groups with, against and among whom they have worked.

As an empirical sociological category, ‘community’ can also be understood as a geographical or spatial entity linked to neighbourhood (urban) and settlement (rural) and associated social-economic structures (Tilley 2003; Harvey 1989). We examine the police-community dynamic in terms of social and spatial proximity. Did police officers live amongst the communities they served? Had they been brought up amongst them? How might we characterise their physical presence? It is assumed too, however, that ‘community’ is as much cultural as it may be structural and physical, and that identity and place are likely to be mutually entwined. A sense of belonging is both physical and social. In creating a framework for the analysis of the relationship between ‘police’ and ‘community’ in the historical past, we suggest it is helpful to identify factors (geographical, demographic, economic and social, cultural, institutional) that appear to have influenced or shaped certain types of outcome in terms of styles of policing. This is not to suggest a reductive or determinist approach, in which a set of inevitable effects are seen to arise from a particular combination of variables. Rather, it is designed to enable better description, analysis and understanding of the relationships that have been formed between police officers and the plural communities whom they have policed.

Policing in Glasgow and the highland counties c. 1900-1960

Archival research and interviewing has served to reinforce the point that police cultures themselves are multiple and heterogeneous. There has been significant variety in styles of policing within and across police forces in Scotland as well as across time and, indeed, within the repertoires of individual officers. Nevertheless it is possible to identify broad trends and hence typologies that enable us to characterise the differences between urban and rural policing with regards to the specific contexts of inner-city Glasgow and the highlands and islands (the latter are also referred to here as ‘highland counties’). Moreover it can be convincingly argued that the models of urban and rural policing that were established by the early twentieth century remained in place until at least the mid-century and in some cases until the 1970s. Table 1 aims to capture what we see as underlying factors that shaped

community-police dynamics alongside their related outcomes in the period that is often equated with a ‘golden age’. The discussion that follows here contextualises and explains the categories highlighted in this table.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

In the highland counties police officers were small in number but were geographically embedded within village settlements. Wives played an important role in the running of the police office. Married officers were usually selected as village constables, the ‘one-man’ police station/office was usually a room within or attached to the police house, and police wives regularly took messages when the police officer was out. Nevertheless some social distance was still maintained, effected by rotation to new police stations every four to six years, which was seen as necessary to prevent officers ‘going native’.² Officers were expected to get to know the settled community, but not too well; in theory a careful balancing of insider/outsider status was required for optimal efficiency. In the highland counties those recruited into the police were ‘local’ in the sense that they had been born and brought up either within the county that they joined or in an adjacent highland area. Personnel records for Inverness County Constabulary from 1901 through to 1968 show remarkable continuity in that the vast majority of recruits were born either in Invernessshire or in the neighbouring counties of Ross, Moray, Sutherland or Caithness.³ Personnel records for the county of Caithness and for Orkney and Shetland show that officers were even more ‘local’ with the vast majority born within the district itself.⁴ Officers were unlikely to be stationed in their native village, and in Inverness-shire they were moved huge distances across their careers given the size of the police district. Nevertheless cultural affinity was important. In Gaelic-speaking areas (Western Isles and Wester Ross), knowledge of Gaelic enabled officers to break down any initial suspicion or distrust. Police ‘embeddedness’ was facilitated by civil society connections, such as church attendance and membership of local societies, as well as sport and youth club volunteering. In some cases friendships were established and are referred to. The policing function was undoubtedly shared with other entities and authority figures: the Church (elders and ministers); family (heads of household); and landowners (through factors and gamekeepers). It is evident that low levels of reported crime were a function of high levels of regulation through other authority structures within established

² Interview Transcript 35.

³ Highland Archives, Inverness, R91/D/8.

⁴ Highland Archives, Wick, R91/E/8.

settlements. Station occurrence books (which were effectively daily diaries) show that the police officer was consulted by these groups for advice, to assist and intervene when informal resolutions did not work, or when other structures of authority broke down. In many instances this advice remained informal, with charges not being pressed.

Given that officers were dispersed in the highland counties, their role was a generalist one. Amongst the settled population, policing was largely concerned with routine administration within an annual cycle of renewing firearms licences and attending sheep-dipping, which involved regular visits to local farms and crofts through which the protocols of sociability were maintained into the early 1970s. The police house acted as an advice, information and communication point, with messages for villagers (about births, deaths, or the sudden illness of relatives) received by telegram in the early part of the century. The telephone did not reach more remote areas until the mid-1930s, and it was initially only the Post Office and police station that were connected, further cementing the police role as a communication node and a central focal point for village and surrounding areas. Thus until the Second World War and beyond, where individual constables were often isolated from each other (particularly on the islands) but embedded within village life, it was the relationship that was forged through everyday encounters that was more important than formal structures of governance. Relationships in the highland counties were interpersonal and individualised rather than professionalised, but involved high levels of discretion and responsibility. Ultimately this created potential for significant strength in terms of the building of trust and legitimacy, but also potential for major weakness. Officers who were interviewed tended to reflect on their own best practice, in some cases in comparison with a predecessor whom they had replaced. As one interviewee explained: ‘The chief said to me, “I want you sergeant in Glencoe.” He said, “I want you to do a good job for me down there. The police have fallen into disrepute.” The sergeant that was there had done a lot of stupid things and he had lost his job’.⁵ As another stated: ‘the guy who was there long before me was bone idle; he never did anything’.⁶ Within a relatively large geographical area trust in the police might rise and fall in line with the behaviour of one officer. The high levels of discretion and autonomy accorded local police constables led to both best and worst examples of effective policing.

⁵ Interview transcript 37.

⁶ Interview transcript 4.

In Glasgow rapid immigration and industrialisation had created very different social contours including high levels of over-crowding, sectarianism and social conflict (Pacione 1995). At the beginning of the twentieth century Glasgow City Police was recruiting a largely migrant population of ‘Highlanders’, Scots from the north-east, and Irish-born males, each group constituting roughly a quarter of recruits 1900-1905.⁷ In a city of high internal UK in-migration, migrants were nevertheless over-represented in police recruitment. In the years just before the First World War, however, the recruitment of migrant labour dropped off and by the 1930s the profile was very similar to highland counties, with recruits being drawn locally from (in this case) Glasgow itself, Lanarkshire and adjacent counties. Significantly, Glasgow police officers did not live on their beats (and thus were not spatially embedded as in highland village stations) although according to memoirs and interviews police officers prided themselves on gleaning intimate knowledge of those who lived and worked on the beat as a result of daily routine and conversation. The protection of property (‘pulling padlocks’) and the prevention of street disorder were the main foci of the beat officer’s work. As in highland areas, relationships and networks were individualised and based on significant levels of discretion, but the beat officer’s duties were far less generalised. In Glasgow and other city forces, specialisation (most obviously through the creation of criminal investigations and plainclothes departments) had already emerged by the early decades of the twentieth century. Legitimacy was claimed through the uniform (which embodied the idea of public office) and authority claims were to a large extent based on positional status that assumed deference to hierarchy; however, these claims were tested through daily encounters and thus also had to be won.

Conflict, confidence and consensus c. 1900-1960

In Glasgow, high levels of social and political conflict meant that police authority was more likely to be challenged, and physical toughness had to be demonstrated to claim legitimacy in some quarters. Robert Colquhoun’s memoirs described his early days in the St Rollox Division in the early 1920s: ‘A man on the beat in the twenties had to be ready to use his fists and his baton at a moment’s notice – especially after the pubs emptied on a Friday or Saturday night’ (Colquhoun 1962: 20). If the stereotype of the Glasgow hard man was forged through the interwar gang culture that has been so carefully delineated by historian Andrew Davies (2013), the masculinity of police officers was often cut from similar cloth: ‘An ex-

⁷ Glasgow City Archives, SR22/55/21 and SR22/57/22.

soldier named Noble Dan, made a habit of approaching any uniform man who came his way and issuing him a solemn formally worded challenge to “single mortal combat”. Every now and then some cop sighed, went with him into a tenement backyard and obliged. Noble Dan was invariably flattened.’ (Colquhoun 1962: 44). If the model of uncompromising policing was reinforced by Chief Constable Sir Percy Sillitoe in his much-vaunted counter-offensive to gang culture, a predominant style of Glasgow policing as tough and physical continued well into the 1950s and 1960s (Sillitoe 1956; Davies 2013; Pieri 2010; McLaughlin 2012). As one interviewee stated: ‘there was a lot of summary justice given out ... Well, some of them were taken down a close and given a good belting, you know Some of the older cops, I mean they were hardy buggers’.⁸ Rough justice was an implicit part of the city’s police culture even for those who did not see themselves as fighters in dealing with a particular clientele: ‘Did I assault him? No I certainly did not. That wasn’t my way. But his nice brand new jacket suddenly was ripped right up the centre vent up to his collar. He was in tears. I said to him, “Next time the same will happen. Mend your ways or leave the area.”’⁹ Officers expected to be assaulted (although they stated they rarely reported incidents) but gave as good as they got: ‘I’ve seen policemen deal fairly severely with the ungodly’.¹⁰ The use of batons was viewed as weakness and officers stated with pride ‘I only used my baton once in my service’. The ability to hold one’s own in a ‘fair [fist] fight’ was seen as necessary in dealing with ‘neds’: ‘I had the feeling that something was going to happen. I had this feeling. Being impolite, I hit one of them and knocked him flat’.¹¹ The physicality of Glasgow policing was possible given the critical mass of officers on the ground that enabled back-up, but it was also a response to the perceived problem of violence in the city. Moreover, officers presented this policing style as accepted and understood by ‘neds’, who are described as defending their own ‘polis’ against ‘out-of-townners’. Rough justice was also seen as a mechanism for dealing with wife-beaters, given the difficulties associated with bringing prosecutions, and hence in accord with working-class codes and values.

Nevertheless, Glasgow City Police were viewed as partisan by many in the interwar years in relation to politics, ethnicity and religion. During the First World War police officers were involved in the surveillance of socialist agitators and anti-war campaigners, and into the 1920s in heavy-handed action against the strikers and Trade Unions activists of ‘Red

⁸ Interview Transcript 13.

⁹ Interview Transcript 9.

¹⁰ Interview Transcript 10.

¹¹ Interview Transcript 15.

Clydeside' (Duncan & McIvor 1992; Gordon 1980). Sectarianism in the city (given the high proportion of residents of Irish birth) was exacerbated by the partition of Ireland in 1921, and Glasgow City Police gained a reputation for being pro-Protestant (although official police rhetoric and many officers themselves emphasised impartiality). Information about the religious beliefs of recruits was not given on personnel records in the first decades of the twentieth century (although it might be assumed that Irish-born recruits were likely to have been Protestant). Notably, this information was included from 1930 onwards, revealing a significant Protestant bias. Only five per cent of those recruited in 1930 -1931 declared as Roman Catholic, a figure that had reduced to two per cent by 1938-1941. There was considerable improvement when recruitment began again after the Second World War, with the percentage of Roman Catholics rising to over 10 per cent across the period 1946-8, reflecting a dissipation of tensions within the city.¹² Given that some 27 per cent of the city's population were identified as regular attenders of Roman Catholic churches by the early 1950s (and some 29 per cent as regular Protestant church attenders) they were still significantly under-represented in Glasgow City Police (Cunnison and Gilfillan 1958: 725). Interviews with former officers relating to service in the 1950s-60s provided varied accounts. Some suggested that religion was rarely referred to, others suggested sectarian prejudice persisted at the level of jokes and black humour. Several stated that it remained a serious problem, with Catholics passed over for promotion until the creation of Strathclyde police in 1975 and the appointment of firstly Sir David McNee as Chief Constable and then Sir Patrick Hamill (himself Catholic) in 1978.

Even in the interwar period, however, there was a further complexity to the relationships between the police and marginalised groups. In September 1933 Labour Councillor Mrs Jean Mann received complaints from constituents who lived amongst the Irish Catholic community of the Garngad regarding the heavy-handed policing of Constable James Robertson, known by the local nickname of 'PC Hitler'. Robertson's critics claimed he had used obscene language, made anti-Catholic threats ('a bomb in that chapel would do no harm'), and harassed both men and women for standing in the street. For the police, however, his actions were a justified response to the 'annoyance' created by 'a large number of unemployed youths who loiter at street corners, indulging in horse play until the early hours of the morning'. There had been an extensive series of arrests for 'breach of the peace' and a 29-year-old man had been charged with an assault on Robertson himself, highlighting the

¹² Glasgow City Archives, SR22/57/22.

escalation of violence between the police and young men in the area. It is noteworthy, however, that 44-year-old Patrick Byrne, himself a member of the Scottish Socialist Party, stated that ‘there was [*sic*] not enough “Hitlers” and pointed out that it was only since this Constable had come to the District that we seem to have had any peace after midnight’. The complaint was investigated by the Inspector of the Northern Division who found that the constable ‘appears to be a keen, energetic officer and I have no occasion to find fault with him or the manner in which he carries out his duties’.¹³ The case demonstrates that whilst some members of marginalised communities experienced police action as victimisation, others welcomed a robust or ‘energetic’ style of policing because of real concerns about anti-social behaviour within the neighbourhood.

In researching the history of public trust in the police we face an obvious methodological problem in that there are no longitudinal sets of quantitative data on which we can draw to assess shifts across the twentieth century. The first significant surveys emerged in the 1960s and, in particular, in relation to the 1962 Royal Commission on Police. Complaints books, where extant, provide some qualitative evidence (as above) but the sources that we have are largely subjective reflections. Norman Morrison, who joined Glasgow City Police in 1889, resigned three years later because the experience was so dispiriting. As a rookie constable from a staunchly Calvinist community on the island of Lewis, he was shocked by the ‘opprobrious’ behaviour of the drunken men and women who crowded onto the High Street at night: ““See that damned ass of a cabbage with the copper’s clothes on? Wait until he runs up against Flaming Paddy and he’ll make his cabbage leaves fly.”” In 1937, however, he wrote that: ‘a great change towards sobriety and better behaviour has come over not only the people of Glasgow but the whole country’ (Morrison 1937: 18-19).

Similar reflection on improvement in relationships between the police and the Irish-Catholic community are apparent in sources generated from other viewpoints. In February 1940 the Lord Provost of Glasgow, Sir Patrick Dollan, was reported to have told the Central Committee of the Scottish Police Federation that ‘the public now regarded the police as their best friends and collaborators’ and that the police ‘were evolving into the counsellors and guides of the whole community’, a change in attitude that had taken place over the previous

¹³ Glasgow City Archives, SR22/63/18 Deputations and Complaints, pp.809- 81; for fuller discussion see A. Davies, “Hitler” in the Garngad: police - community relations in Glasgow's "Little Ireland", unpublished paper presented at the British Crime Historians’ Symposium, University of Liverpool, 26 September 2014.

15 years.¹⁴ His comments were revealing because Dollan was the first Irish Catholic to become Glasgow's Lord Provost (in 1938) and, as a former left-wing journalist and Red Clydesider, he had been imprisoned during the First World War for opposing conscription (Knox). However, his rhetoric of enhanced public confidence was not necessarily reflective of the views of all social groups in all parts of the city, although they are suggestive of the loosening hold of sectarianism and of anti-Irish sentiment as well as the changed standing of socialist politicians in the city. It may be, too, that his 'appeal' to a united 'community' was imperative given the need to sustain morale during a war effort that Dollan himself supported this time round. Working-class memoirs that describe experiences of growing up in inner-city areas such as the Gorbals as well as Glasgow's housing schemes (such as Blackhill) in the 1950s – 60s depict a very clear 'us' and 'them' divide in which it continued to be unacceptable to 'grass' to the police who were viewed as a hostile presence (Henderson 1994: 53; Macfarlane 2010: 150).

Interviews with former officers suggest that the closest alliances were built up between the police and the proprietors of cafes, restaurants, shops and small business as well as their staff, who they saw routinely as part of their daily work on the beat and often provided them with tea and refreshments (see also Pieri 2010). Street policing was for the benefit of property-owners and those who saw themselves as respectable and law-abiding and was targeted against the 'ned'. Colquhoun commented on this rivalry in 1962, reflecting on his interwar experiences: 'the thugs and petty thieves called us, at the politest, "snouts". Our name for them, then and still today, was "neds"'. (Colquhoun 1962: 19) If the older animosities held by socialist, Catholic and Irish communities were eroding by the mid twentieth century, they were replaced with feelings of exclusion that were most obviously generational by the 1960s (Bartie 2010; see also Jackson 2014: 44). The Second World War may well have been a high watermark for trust in the police in Glasgow but the complexity of police-community relations in the city cannot be over-stated.

Yet this complexity was not restricted to the urban. A concomitant analysis of social and political tensions in the highlands and islands – and the ways in which they impacted upon styles of policing – is also necessary. The importance of popular memory and genealogy in older settlements contributed to lingering perceptions amongst crofting families in some areas that the police were the lackeys of the landowners. Interviews with former officers who had

¹⁴ *Scotsman* 23 Feb 1940: 11.

served in the Western Isles in particular suggest that police involvement in the forced eviction of tenants during the clearances of the mid-nineteenth century had neither been forgotten nor forgiven. Nor had their mobilisation in support of landowners during the Crofters' Wars in Skye and Lewis in the 1880s (in which crofters had protested over the shortage of grazing land). As one interviewee who served on Skye commented: 'There was always this Highland clearances ... there's a wee bit of suspicion of authority. They sort of held back a bit until they really got to know you. You had to gain their confidence. But there was always this cloud.'¹⁵ Some rural officers cultivated contacts with the factors (who ran the estates for the landlords) and they often benefited from this: 'the landowners were friendly towards us and always would give us fishing permission, here there and everywhere'.¹⁶ Undoubtedly landowners continued to expect the loyalty of the police with regards to poaching and trespass into the mid-twentieth. Yet for crofters and other local people the attitude that salmon poaching from the estates was 'social' rather than 'real crime' and hence a matter to be concealed if not condoned, lingered on:

It was an age-old tradition that they were poorer people and they saw the fish going past in their nets in the sea or in the lochs or in the rivers. They thought, and they'd [been] brought up by their forefathers before them, that they were entitled to the fish. Because who did they belong to? ... The estates had ghillies and stuff but, really, the police had to police it under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Scotland) Act.¹⁷

The police themselves would not always be drawn: 'if someone complained that someone was working a monofilament net for catching cold iron – salmon – you'd have to do something. But it's not a thing you would chase after'.¹⁸ Highland officers like those in urban areas were drawn from working-class (or similar agrarian) backgrounds but were employed to uphold the protection of property. Similar tensions between plebeian values and the rule of law were expressed in memoirs produced by police officers with regard to the theft of coal from Lanarkshire pits in the 1940s, seen as a necessary part of an economy of makeshift (Muncie 1979: 29). Interestingly Glasgow officers had no such qualms about arresting men for street-betting, which they argued obstructed footpaths, encouraged rough behaviour and

¹⁵ Interview Transcript 36.

¹⁶ Interview Transcript 37.

¹⁷ Interview Transcript 40.

¹⁸ Interview Transcript 30.

upset household economies when much-needed earnings were gambled away (Muncie 1979: 18; McNee 1983: 40).

In the highlands and islands there was a clear divide between the ‘law-abiding’ settled population and itinerant ‘outsiders’, who, across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries largely consisted of transient male populations moving into the area for work as a result of industrialisation. These included ‘navvies’ involved in rail and then road-building projects, the construction of hydro-electric schemes and aluminium industries, and the influx of a male labour force associated with Dounreay nuclear power development in Caithness (from 1954) and the development of the oil industry. It also included the large number of military personnel stationed in the Highlands or moving through it in the First and Second World Wars (although this will not be discussed in depth here). In effect the police, embedded within the older shrinking residential settlements, were policing a transient male population (who were outside the ties and checks of familial structures) on behalf of a settled population that was concerned about external threats. First published in 1913, Patrick Macgill’s semi-autobiographical novel, *Children of the Dead End* described the outcast status of the Irish ‘navvy’ on the tramp in rural Scotland: ‘The children hide behind their mother’s petticoats when they see us coming, frightened to death of the awful navvy man who carries away naughty children, and never lets them back to their mothers again’.(Macgill 199: 166)

The living conditions of the migrant labourer, sleeping in sub-standard dormitories in which beds were shared between day and nights shift workers (and thus constantly occupied), seems to have changed remarkably little by the 1950s from Macgill’s day. Moreover, interviews with former officers make it clear that a very different style of policing was reserved for the male labour-camp workforce:

So I had two types of policing. I had these very tough men, who lived a very sparse and very hard existence building these things on the one hand. I had a local, domestic population, who were quite couthy and quite gentle on the other hand. So I found very quickly that I really had to vary how I did my job with each I would be very gentle with my own population whether it be a domestic dispute or, perhaps, a neighbourly dispute.¹⁹

¹⁹ Interview Transcript 26.

We were hit out of the blue by hundreds and hundreds of workers who didn't necessarily behave themselves at night... there were lock-ups, nine or ten people locked up every night... it was just a huge shock in everybody's system when the industry [aluminium smelter] came.²⁰

I remember the first crowd of Irish labourers who arrived at the railway station to start work there [Dounreay], the very first. We went up and looked at them. My word, what a tough-looking crowd they were. Very nice blokes but mercy, they were tough. They were taken out there and I remember their first pay day. A whole mob of them in the town in their working clothes, and they in with money and they were... well, the cells were full.²¹

They'd fight over anything; fight in the billets or fight, even in the bar ...it was quite rough, yes at times. It was the only time I ever drew my baton in 30 years....²²

The interviews clarify that a 'gentle' and diffusive approach was used with the settled population and that differing tactics were needed with the male labour force. Whilst this was characterised as 'tough' and might entail physical force, officers needed to be aware there may not be back-up and that non-confrontational tactics were still necessary.

It has been argued that the establishment of county police forces in nineteenth-century Scotland was largely a response to concerns about vagrancy in rural areas (Carson and Idzikowska 1989). Well into the twentieth century, station occurrence books demonstrate that the completion of the biannual 'vagrancy census' (a head count of all vagrants after full search had been made in the area) was part of the cycle of duties of the village constable (although very few in fact were located through this process). Station occurrence books suggest that 'tramps', 'hawkers' and 'tinkers' were scapegoated as thieves and arsonists in the early twentieth century. For example, after a hay stack was destroyed by fire near the village of Ardersier, Inverness-shire, in March 1923 it was recorded there was no trace of 'tramps or suspicious persons having been about'; when clothes were stolen from a washing line in November suspicion fell on 'a man of the hawker stamp' who had been asking if he

²⁰ Interview Transcript 37.

²¹ Interview Transcript 30.

²² Interview Transcript 22.

could borrow old clothes for his wife.²³ Recent studies of rural crime and policing have highlighted how travellers have been constructed as ‘folk-devils’ within rural societies, a situation that was exacerbated by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, which tightened the laws of trespass (Mawby and Yarwood 2011; Sibley 1995). In Scotland the term ‘tinker’ was used widely to refer to gypsy-travellers. There was undoubtedly some romanticism connected to the gypsy-traveller community in the years before the Second World War, and its members often performed an important economic function as pedlars and traders. Nevertheless, they were accorded increasingly ‘little legitimacy in rural space’ (Halfacree 2011: 129). On Skye in 1923 the Dunvegan police constable received reports from a crofter that ‘tinkers’ were camped on common grazing and ‘that as he had a quantity of peat in the vicinity of said camps, he wished the tinkers removed by the police’. The group (nine adults and ten children) were warned by the officer and they agreed to move on when the stormy weather had cleared, suggesting that a compromise solution was reached.²⁴ By the 1950s occurrence books for other areas of Inverness-shire show that ‘tinkers’ who were known to be scrap-metal dealers were regularly visited by police in the search for stolen goods. One church minister wrote in 1965 about social attitudes in his Inverness-shire parish: ‘The owners of “basket” caravans and dealers in floorcloth were frequent summer visitors ... [but] the few tinkers who remain have degenerated into beggars, with a decreasing number of housewives having compassion upon them’ (Darroch 1985: 211). Always separate from and viewed as outsiders by the settled community, gypsy-travellers were stigmatised as they struggled to adapt economically. For the most part, gypsy-travellers were viewed with suspicion by the settled population when items went missing. Some police officers attempted to mediate the distrust that arose between the two groups: one officer interviewed even spoke with pride of learning to speak the ‘tinker’s’ cant, and of befriending and assisting travellers.²⁵ Yet those referred to as ‘tinkers’ were easy suspects who were routinely visited in relation to enquiries regarding property.

In highland counties, therefore, just as in urban Glasgow, ‘communities’ should be viewed as multiple and heterogeneous across the twentieth century. Policing tended to take place on behalf of and in the interests of the settled population, amongst whom officers were stationed. The police were involved in a careful balancing of their own insider/outsider status

²³ Highland Archives, Inverness, R91/D/B/5/1/4.

²⁴ Highland Archives, Portree, R91/D/D/5/3/2.

²⁵ Interview Transcript 30.

but the drawing of this line affected whose interests were represented. The ability of many police officers to gain acceptance in rural areas, as well as the dispersed nature of both the population and police presence, also facilitated the recruitment and use of Special Constables (police volunteers) by the 1960s (see also Gill and Mawby 1990). It is noteworthy that former Glasgow City officers described attitudes towards the Special Constables with whom they sometimes served as overwhelmingly negative ('not proper police') whilst those who served in Highland counties saw them as an invaluable support. Arguably, those who worked as village constables were more likely to see being a police officer as a very particular job or role amongst that of others within a wider settled community. In urban areas (such as Glasgow), policing was a group identity that was constructed in opposition to 'the policed' (with the latter categorised as either the 'public' or 'neds') as ethnographic work has established (Young 1991).

Regionalisation and technological change: the 1970s

Table 1 does not, of course, adequately encompass the dynamics of technological and social change across time. The variables that form its contents have been frozen to indicate a predominant type (although our commentary has sought to suggest ways in which the precise co-ordinates were in constant flux). The pace of technological change (including the rise of auto-mobility and the communications revolution) was most keenly felt in the 1980s and 1990s, although key moments were experienced earlier. Interviews with former highlands officers suggest that the potential for a close (insider) relationship with the settled community was most compromised by the introduction of the drink driving limit and the road-side breathalyser in 1967. The enforcement of legislation relating to motor offences had, from the 1930s, brought the police into contact with a new group of 'offenders' (the middle-classes and the otherwise 'law-abiding') who had previously escaped scrutiny (Emsley 1993). In rural areas the drink-driving clamp-down from the late 1960s had a similar effect in terms of an ordinary 'law-abiding' settled population. Given concerns about serious accidents and fatalities caused by drink-driving, the legislation was not something around which officers were able to exercise discretion. As one officer commented: 'Starting to breathalyse drunk drivers: that was extremely unpopular, I suspect. It was never, that sort of information was never fed back to you, but you got inkling'.²⁶ Another stated: 'At one time nobody ever reported a drunk-driver. In my early days it was just rife ... but if you did somebody in the

²⁶ Interview Transcript 26.

early days for it, you were a sod of a cop'.²⁷ In the quest to reform behaviours and cultural practices that were widespread amongst local communities (however dangerous), the police were firmly identified as being on the side of the centralising state.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

Table 2 aims to chart shifts in the factors that shaped the police-community dynamic in the highlands and islands by the 1980s, as well as their impacts and effects. Based on our interviews it also accords to some extent with Young's ethnographic work on a rural force in England which charted the rise of reactive policing from great distances and the central imposition of 'community' initiatives in place of informal ties and the use of discretion (Young 1993). The older focus on settlements (as nodes of communication through which individual officers were embedded within networks and localities) was replaced with a focus on the policing of highways as vectors for movement of traffic (and indeed criminality). The opening up of tourism from the 1960s, and attempts to encourage resettlement created a more fluid population. With the consolidation of the county constabularies of the highlands and islands into Northern Constabulary after 1975 (regionalisation), greater specialisation and professionalisation was possible. Nevertheless it remained the case that the role of the 'village constable' continued much as previously into the late twentieth century, particularly in some of the more remote island settlements. In many respects 'local' police officers continued to be generalists (often covering large distances) but were now supported by a range of specialist units to provide technical back-up; they were thus less isolated than previously. Moreover the development of specialism and professionalization within the larger police district created career development opportunities that for many made policing a more attractive occupation. Interviews with police officers who served in the highland and island areas that became Northern Constabulary thus present its creation as optimising the benefits of both discretionary policing and professionalization (in combining both). For those who served in the more rural areas of what became the new Strathclyde Police after 1975 (eg. Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Argyllshire), however, the experience was of a negative pull towards bureaucratisation (seen in terms of 'one size fits all') as the model that had been crafted for Glasgow City was effectively rolled out to all.

²⁷ Interview Transcript 37.

Conclusions

In his 1981 James Smart memorial lecture, former Scottish Office civil servant Sir William Fraser said:

There are those inside the police service and outside, who recollect nostalgically the constables of their youth – the picture is generally of big men from the Highlands and Islands who maintained law and order in city and village by judicious use of the kind word, the frown and the back of the hand. Of course such men existed, although they were not as widely recognised as we are sometimes told. (Fraser 1981)

Was there a ‘golden age’ for police and community in the first half of the twentieth century? Given transformations in public expectations and police ethics over the last thirty years, the ‘early’ Glasgow model would be unsustainable now given its reliance on physical force in a city where there were high levels of social and political conflict. At best, life was tough and policing was tough too. In the case of the village constable (highland counties) a more complex picture emerges in any assessment of its strengths and weaknesses as a model for building trust and legitimacy (as Table 3 suggests). High levels of autonomy and discretion could be productive, leading to the creation of deep qualitative relationships, but these were also highly dependent on the individual and could lead to ineffective policing (from the perspectives of both the police authority and the local community) given the remoteness of many rural police stations. As other studies have shown, the effectiveness of discretion is optimised if it is combined with the structures of professional training and supportive line management as well as processes for the selection and retention of motivated and committed individuals (Rosenbaum 1994; Fielding, 2002). Arguably, structures that enable the careful balancing of discretion and procedure have only become meaningful and possible in rural areas as a result of the communications revolution of the late twentieth century.

[INSERT TABLE 3 HERE]

This study has also shown that different policing styles were delivered in rural highland areas in relation to ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ communities in the first half of the twentieth century; policing tended to take place on behalf of the settled population whose values it shared (although some officers also attempted to use discretion to dilute the demands of the settled majority with regards to gypsy-travellers). As other studies have argued, recognition of cultural difference is needed to engage and encourage dialogue across

multiple social groups or plural communities (Crawford 1995; Topping 2008). It is undoubtedly the case that the embeddedness of the rural officer within his locality had the potential to optimise the securing of trust and legitimacy amongst the settled community and was a key factor in shaping the police-community relationship. Such a characteristic may not be easily applied to vastly differing and complex current contexts, but the principles that it suggests are worthy of scrutiny. The embeddedness of the early model was physical and geographical, and was also a characteristic that was possessed by the police officer. In a current context in which (plural) communities may be diasporic or virtual, the social proximity or connectivity that it implies need not necessarily be a characteristic of police personnel themselves, but might be maintained through the agency of volunteers or community representatives.

It can be argued that nostalgia for a former era of policing is misplaced given continued low morale amongst officers in the first half of the twentieth century on account of low pay and, in the case of many highland village constables, severely substandard accommodation in which they lived with their families in old, damp and leaking police houses; ‘modern’ conveniences of electricity and plumbed bathrooms were slow to arrive because of restricted police budgets.²⁸ There were few opportunities for promotion and little in the way of reward for long service other than the police pension. The high levels of satisfaction that officers reported in relation to the setting up of Northern Constabulary after 1975 were a result of improved resources (and working conditions) that in part resulted from economies of scale that made policing more resilient.

Finally, this study has demonstrated that the relationships between police officers and communities are diverse and complex, shaped by a range of local cultural, social and economic factors. However the institution of police is formally structured, this diversity needs to be acknowledged in the operational delivery of local policing.

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²⁸ Highland Archives, Inverness, R91/D/10 Inverness Constabulary police station maintenance files.

Figure 1: Distribution of Interviewees (Northern Constabulary), by places worked during career (N = 17).
Map data ©2014 Google.

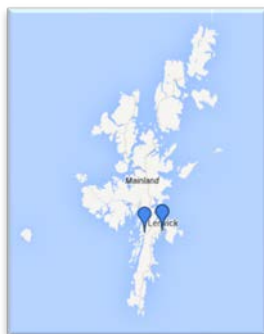
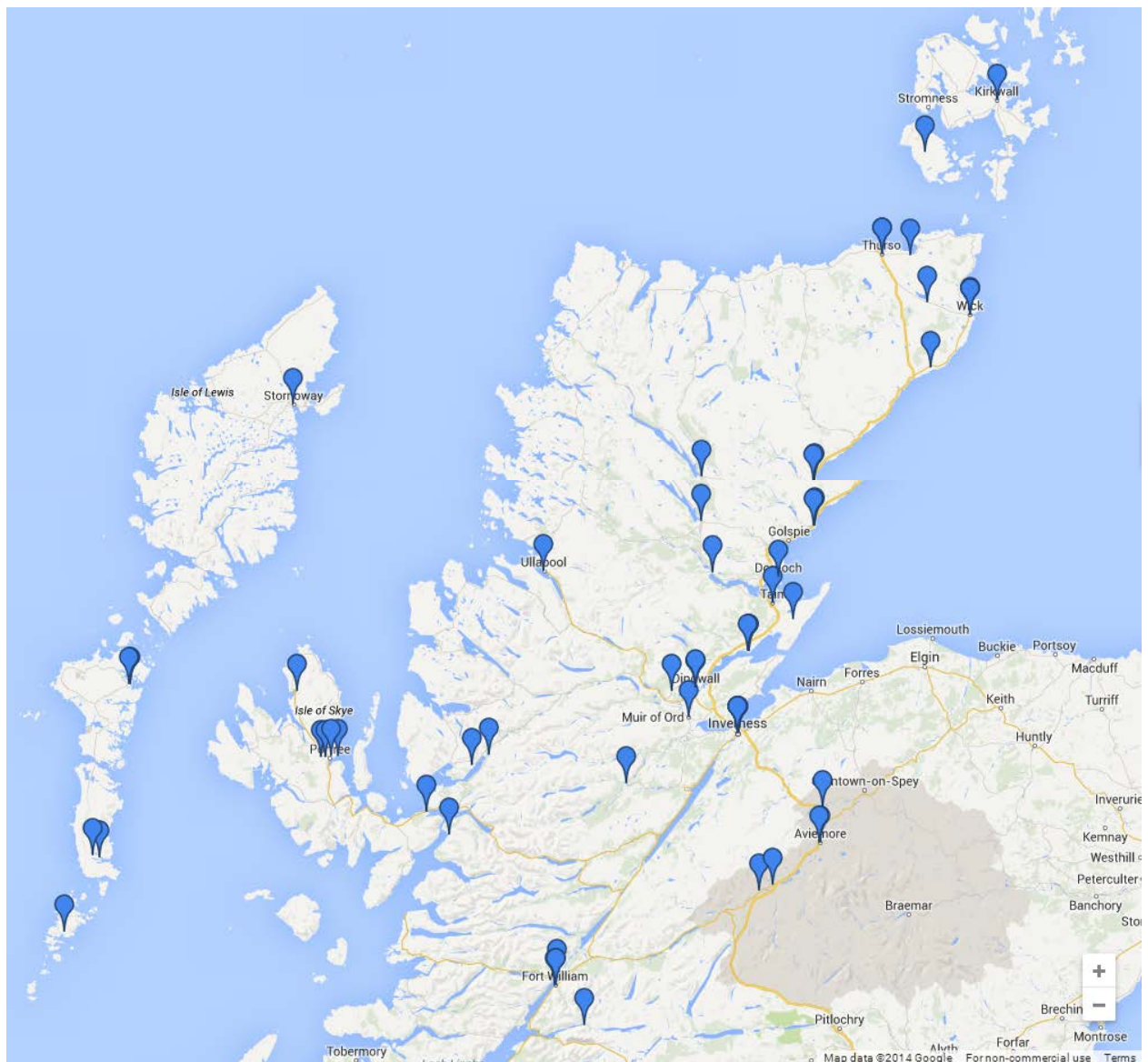


Figure 2: Distribution of Interviewees (Strathclyde), by places worked during career (N=23). Map data ©2014 Google.

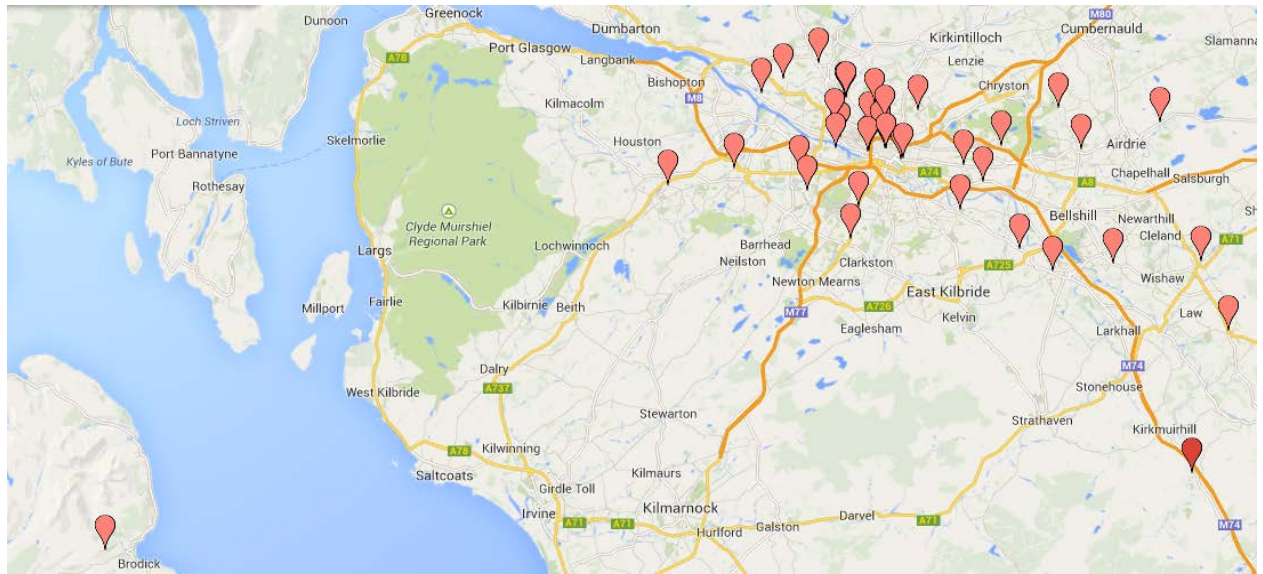


Table 1: Comparison of Highland counties and Glasgow c. 1900-1960

	Highland counties c. 1900-1960	Glasgow c.1900-1960 (street policing)
<u>Factors</u>		
Population	Depopulation (outward migration); sparse distribution	Growth (immigration); dense distribution
Communities	Distinction between: a) older settled population (partly closed with high levels of self-regulation and low levels of internal social conflict) and b) transient population (labour and military camps; 'tinkers' and vagrants)	More fluid and open, but also high levels of social conflict: sectarianism; class and politics.
Police presence	Officers and families embedded and visible; 'insiders'	Aloof but visible; migrant
Police role	Generalist Admin/advice/service/communication	Increasingly specialist (with movement into and between specialist units). Street constable: protection of property; street order
Characteristics of networks and relationships	Individualised and interpersonal; 'friendship'.	Individualised and interpersonal
Partnerships	informal	Informal
<u>Outcomes</u>		
Police discretion	Very high level of autonomy	High level of autonomy within tasks
Police claim to authority and legitimacy	Positional status / deference In practice highly personalised	Positional status / deference
Police tactics	Diffusive; consensual; moral force.	Consensual but with recourse to: confrontational; robust; physical force.
Policing whom?	Migrant males (navvies; labour; military; vagrant)	Political dissenters; house-breakers; the anti-social ('neds')
Policing for whom?	Settled community.	State: national security. Property owners; 'Law-abiding'.
Partisan?	Perceived alliance with landowners in some areas.	Perceived association with Protestant community.
Crime rates	low	High

Table 2: Changes in Highland counties by the late twentieth century

	Highland counties c. 1900-1960	Highland counties c.1970<
<u>Factors</u>		
Population	Depopulation	slow growth
Communities	Older closed settlements	Fluid and more open
Police presence (geography)	Embedded – key node	Coverage of large areas; trunk roads
Police role	Generalist Admin/advice/service/communication	Generalist supported by specialist
Relationships and networks	Individualised and interpersonal	Professionalised
Partnerships	Informal	Becoming more formal
<u>Outcomes</u>		
Police discretion	High level of autonomy	Discretion in some aspects but increasingly procedural
Police authority and legitimacy	Positional status / deference	Professional

Table 3: Strengths and weakness of earlier model of policing for building trust and legitimacy

	Early twentieth century	Late twentieth century
Strengths	<p>Embeddedness: Potential for deep qualitative relationships based on mutual trust</p> <p>Role as generalist: builds up trust</p> <p>Discretion: response is personalised and bespoke to meet individual need</p>	<p>High levels of professional training</p> <p>Emphasis on structures and procedures: impartiality</p> <p>Improvement in resources and working conditions (resilience)</p>
weaknesses	<p>Discretion: too dependent on character and personality</p> <p>Potential to be viewed as partisan</p> <p>Lack of professional training</p> <p>Lack of specialist knowledge</p>	<p>Emphasis on structures and procedures: less flexibility</p> <p>Less embedded; emphasis on coverage/movement</p>

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